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Agenda item 7
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-third session

Draft report

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Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation

(*Item 3 (b)*)

Programme evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme

1. At its 4th meeting, on 4 June 2013, the Committee considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the programme evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (E/AC.51/2013/2).

2. The Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services introduced the report and responded to questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. Many delegations noted with appreciation the high quality of the report, which they found useful and interesting. They generally agreed with its results and conclusions and supported its recommendations. In the view of delegations, the report showed how UNEP had faced challenges in the environmental area and had fulfilled its mandate effectively, in particular with regard to monitoring the state of the world's environment and guiding the transition to the green economy, as well as with its strong science base. A number of delegations further expressed agreement with statements in the OIOS report that called for more attention to be paid to capacity-building and the strengthening of the UNEP regional offices, in addition to enhancing presence at the national level.

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4. Delegations also raised concerns about overlapping and unclear roles and inadequate coordination between UNEP and other United Nations entities within the environmental field, seeking further clarification on the reasons for and solutions to that issue. They called for increased cooperation with other United Nations entities, such as the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in the area of sustainable energy and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the area of science. A number of delegations emphasized that there was a need for more synergies between environmental conventions served by UNEP and for lower administrative costs to UNEP partners. A query was raised as to why no reference had been made in the report to poverty eradication, which was an important goal of sustainable development.

5. Several delegations discussed the recent United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, expressing their general support for its conclusions with regard to strengthening UNEP. The view was also expressed, however, that strengthening UNEP also required increased accountability.

6. Delegations sought clarification on some of the language used in the report, including "partnerships", "green economy" and "global green new deal", especially because they were concepts that had not yet been agreed upon by Member States. Further clarification was sought as to the reference made by OIOS in its report to "a lack of shared understanding regarding the UNEP regional and global work programmes and activities". Explanation was also sought regarding the use of federated resource mobilization policies. Furthermore, one delegation expressed concern regarding the prioritization by UNEP of its activities given its high level of donor funding.

7. A few delegations also commented on the structure and number of posts being funded from the programme budget, saying that they would have expected some review and more action-oriented comments regarding the earmarking of resources received by UNEP. As to resources, a number of delegations said that resource discussions were not the purview of the Committee and would be addressed in another forum. Clarification was sought as to what was meant by developing "stronger programme planning and management processes", in addition to any lessons learned and comparative advantages.

8. With regard to the methodology of the OIOS report, delegations asked about the low response rate (33 per cent) to the survey of the States members of the UNEP Governing Council, how the survey had been conducted and OIOS verification of the data reported.

Conclusions and recommendations

9. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly should approve all the recommendations contained in the report of OIOS.**

10. **With regard to recommendation 1, the Committee also recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to further increase transparency and accountability to Member States.**

11. **The Committee recognized that UNEP had achieved positive results in addressing a broad range of environmental issues, had been critical to the development of global environmental norms and standards and had achieved positive results in building the capacity of national Governments.**

12. The Committee noted the efforts under way to strengthen UNEP and the role of the organization in promoting the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system.

13. In that regard, the Committee stressed the importance of promoting a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, in addition to coordination within the United Nations system.

14. The Committee welcomed the efforts of UNEP to strengthen capacity-building support services in line with the needs and priorities of Member States.